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Claims

1. (currently amended) A panel (4) connecting system comprising at least first and second panels, wherein each panel has at least on one side thereof having connecting means (3, 4, 7, 9) which permit a positive connection with the respective other panel, wherein a further panel (2).

- the first panel (1) comprises as connecting means laterally a groove (3) formed by two rigid flanks,
- one of the two rigid flanks (6) is longer than the other one,
- the longer rigid flank (6) comprises a recess (7),
- the other second panel comprises as connecting means laterally a tongue (4), which is shaped to fit into the groove of the first panel,
- the tongue (4) comprises on an under or top side a plurality of lugs (9), each which lugs are arranged in one line parallel to the tongue, each lug exhibiting a space exhibiting a spacing from an adjacent lug,
- whereby the lugs (9) and the recess (7) are so arranged with respect to each other, that the lugs (9) are able to engage with the recess (7); when the two panels are joined, and
~~the side of the tongue comprising the lug comprises a recess in particular in the form of a slope (12), so that when the two panels are in the joined state, there remains, as a result of the recess formed in particular by a slope (12), an interval between the side of the tongue (4) comprising the~~

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~~lug (9) and the longer rigid flank (6), so that the open end of the tongue does not touch the rigid flank (6) when the two panels are joined.~~

2. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the lugs (9) reaches to the bottom of the recess recess (7) in the engaged state or the a raised area (19) at the a open end of the flank (6) extends to the end of the a recess (20) which is formed by the lugs (9) on the underside of the associated panel.

3. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 2, in which the side of the tongue (4) which comprises the lugs (9) as the result of the provision of a recess does not touch the flank (6) in the interior of the groove (3) when the panels are joined, so that an interval (17) remains.

4. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 3, in which the lugs (9) makes contact with the a side wall of the recess (7), through which connection between the two panels (1, 2) is effected.

5. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the recess is present as a channel.

6. (cancelled) ~~A panel according to claim 1, in which the tongue (4) is separated from the longer rigid flank (6) from the lug (9) up to the slope (12) by a gap (17).~~

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7. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which a plurality of lugs (9) is provided on a longitudinal side or on a transverse side of a panel (2), wherein each lug (9) exhibits a spacing from an adjacent lug (9).
8. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the lugs (9) project substantially perpendicular to the surface (10) of the said second panel.
9. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which tongue (4), grooves (3), recesses (7) and lugs (9) are so provided that the positive connection is produced by a tongue being twisted into a groove.
10. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which tongues (4), grooves (3), ~~channels~~ recess (7) and lugs (9) are so dimensioned that intervals or gaps (13) remain between the open a distal end of a tongue (4) and a groove (3) of panels connected to one another, so that a tongue (4) may be twisted into a groove (3).
11. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which lugs (9) are distributed uniformly along a longitudinal side or a transverse side.

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12. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the distance between two lugs (9) corresponds roughly to the length of a lug along a longitudinal side or transverse side.

13. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the transition from a top edge of a lug (9) to a top edge of an adjacent lug (9) is a circular in shape.

14. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which at least ~~one~~ said tongue (4) comprises a slope on its top side, so that the tongue tapers towards the a distal open end of said tongue.

15. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which a groove (3) comprises a slope (14) in an outward direction on its top side, so that in this way a gap remains between the tongue and the groove in the joined state.

16. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which on ~~the~~ a short transverse side of a panel (1) at least one elastic flank (6) is provided.

17. (currently amended) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the flanks of the groove (3) are substantially of equal length on ~~the~~ a short transverse side.

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18. (currently amended) A method for the loosening of two a first and second panels (1, 2), each panel (1) having connecting means (3, 4, 7, 9) which permit a positive connection with a further panel (2), panel (1) comprises as connecting means laterally a groove (3) formed by two rigid flanks,

- one of the two rigid flanks (6) is longer than the other one,
- the longer rigid flank (6) comprises a recess (7),
- the other panel comprises laterally a tongue (4),
- the tongue (4) comprises on an under- or top side a plurality of lugs (9), each lug exhibiting a spacing from an adjacent lug,
- the lugs (9) and the recess (7) are so arranged that the lugs (9) are able to engage with the recess (7); and

the side of the tongue comprising the lugs comprises a recess in particular in the form of a slope (12), so that when the two panels are in the joined state, there remains, as a result of the recess formed in particular by a slope (12), an interval between the side of the tongue (4) comprising the lugs (9) and the longer rigid flank (6), so that the open end of the tongue does not touch the rigid flank (6) when the two panels are joined, said panels (1,2) connected positively to one another on the short transverse sides, ~~characterized in that~~ comprising displacing said first the panel (1) ~~is displaced along the~~ a connecting joint (5) until said first panel (1) is loosened from ~~the other~~ said second panel (2).

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19. (New) A panel connecting system according to claim 1, in which the side of the tongue comprising the lugs comprises a sloped surface, so that when the two panels are in the joined state, there remains, as a result of the sloped surface, an interval between the side of the tongue comprising the lugs and the longer flank, so that a distal end of the tongue does not touch the flank when the two panels are joined.

20. (New) A panel connecting system according to claim 19, in which the tongue (4) is separated from the longer rigid flank (6) from the lugs (9) up to the slope (12) by a gap (17).